



# THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

## **FAVORABLE**

**SB 686 Civil Actions - Child Sexual Abuse – Definition, Damages and Statute  
of Limitations (The Child Victims Act of 2023)**

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**Episcopal Diocese of Maryland**

**2/23/2023**

**To: Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair, Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice-  
Chair, and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**FROM: Rev. Linda Boyd, Co-Chair, and Lynn Mortoro, Maryland Episcopal  
Public Policy Network, Maryland, Diocese of Maryland**

The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland strongly supports SB 686. Someone who victimizes a child should not be able to hide behind time. SB 686 is about doing the right thing for those individuals traumatized through sexual abuse in the state of Maryland. If a person who was sexually assaulted as a child takes too long to report his or her abuse, the abuser escapes civil prosecution. The perpetrator is free to keep stalking, grooming and abusing children. We are committed to recognizing and reporting abuse and neglect as part of the Safeguarding God's Children program. This program is designed to help people recognize, report, and, perhaps most importantly, prevent abuse and neglect of our children and youth. The Diocese supports behaviors and practices that allow members, and participants in the Diocese to fully demonstrate love and compassion for children and youth in sincere and genuine relationships. We recognize that relationships are the foundation of Christian ministry, and that community is central to the life of the church. The Diocese is committed to providing safe places for children, and youth, to grow in their life in Christ.

CHILDUSA reports that “most child victims disclose (if at all) at an average age of 52 years of age, and 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys in the U.S. are sexually abused.” SB686 takes an important step to protect victims' rights. The current law, as written, defends and protects predators. Abolishing the statute of limitations for sex crimes against children will not solve the problem of child sexual abuse overnight in our country, but it will arm society with the vehicle to protect our children. Society's need to identify and apprehend child sex offenders does not expire with time, and neither should a victim's access to justice.

We urge a favorable report on SB 686.